

THE
DOCTRINE
OF
MERIT
Confuted,
IN A
SERMON
ON
St. LUKE xvii. 10.

So likewise you, when ye shall have done all those things, which are commanded you, say, We are Unprofitable Servants.

By EDM. RYVES, D.D.
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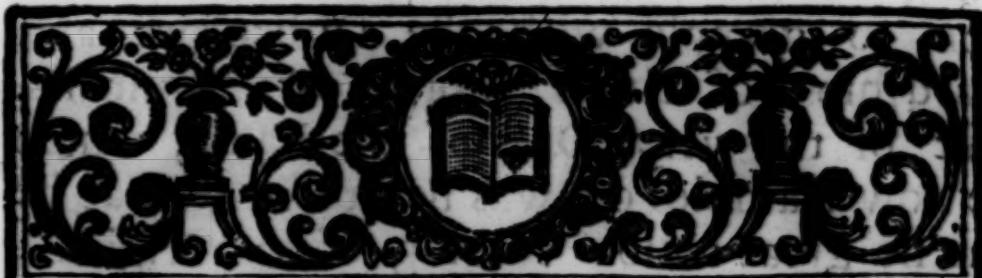


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St. LUKE xvii. 10.

So likewise you, when ye shall have done all those things, which are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable Servants.



F we consider the true State and Condition of Man, from his Entrance into the World to the time of his going out of it, we shall find him, when left to himself, the most helpless and insufficient Part of the Creation. All other Creatures do, by some natural Instinct, as soon as they are born find the Way themselves to some Support or Sustenance; whereas Man would soon be lost, without Direction and Assistance: The rest have naturally either Wool or Feathers, or some other sort of natural

tural Clothing to defend 'em from the Weather; but this poor naked Wretch has nothing but a thin Skin and a tender Constitution, to grapple with the Difficulties and Hardships of either Storms or Tempests. Out of the very Dust of the Earth, which he now tramples on, was he taken, so that he has no great reason to brag of his Original; and to put a stop to his Pride and Vanity, to that too shall he return. A poor Account truly of this Great, this Lordly Creature! So that if there be nothing between these two, I mean between his Birth and Death, that can give occasion to his Vanity, I cannot imagine what it is he can boast of. And if there be, it must be either in his Infancy, his Youth, or his Old Age. In the first, he is under Parents, Tutors, and Guardians, so that he is not then so much as his own Man, as we call it: In the last, he is hastning down the Precipice apace, and frequently as childish, and in as much need of Governours as in the former Condition; so that it's plain he can have nothing to boast of either in his Infancy or Old Age: So that if there be any thing that can reasonably give encouragement to his Vanity, it must be in his Youth. And for my part, I cannot conceive what that can be. For is he placed in the most eminent and exalted Post of Honours? It is possible that may be owing more to the Favour of his Prince, than to any real Merit of his own: But suppose he does by his great Parts and distin-

distinguishing Abilities most abundantly deserve it, that one Question, Who maketh thee to differ from another ? is enough to mortify all his Pride, and to convince him, that not his Merit, but God's Mercy occasion'd his Advancement ; that it is he that pulleth down one, and setteth up another. Is he rich (as he vainly thinks) beyond all Possibility of Want ? Why there too he will find himself helpless and insecure ; for he that gave may soon take away, and then he has no Remedy, but to bless the Name of the Lord that did it. So that I can see nothing that he can possibly boast of. He cannot so much of himself as think a good Thought, much less perform a good Action. Can he add one Cubit to his Stature ? No, as high as he is, he cannot make himself one Inch higher. Can he make one black Hair white ? No, all his deep Notions in Philosophy cannot do that which even Old Age will do for him. What is it then, that of himself he can do ? Can he so much as exist, and continue himself in being, without the Support and Assistance of Another ? No ; the same God that made him, must continually protect him, or he will relapse into Nothing.

And if this now be the true State and Condition of Man, it must be senseless, to the last degree senseless, for any one to imagine he can merit from God. And because I know there are a Sett of Men in the World, whose whole Religion, or at least a very considerable

part of it, turns entirely upon the Truth of this Doctrine of Merit, I shall endeavour to shew, that it is false, absurd, and impossible, from the Words of the Text, which I take to be a full Answer to every thing that can be said for it: *So likewise you, when ye shall have done all those things, which are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable Servants.*

Which Words (as we may see by the word *so*) are an Application to something going before 'em, and are indeed one side of a Comparison, the Brightness of which can never be justly or fairly seen, unless the other be at the same time equally clearly represented. It cannot be therefore impertinent to consider the Context a little, to which the Text has so near a relation. Our Saviour in the three preceding Verses puts this Question to his Disciples: *Which of you having a Servant plowing or feeding Cattle, will say to him by-and-by, when he is come from the Field, Go, and sit down to meat? and will not rather say to him, Make ready wherewith I may sup, and gird thyself and serve me, till I have eaten and drunken, and afterwards thou shalt eat and drink?* A reasonable thing certainly, that the Master should be serv'd first! But suppose that Servant should think so too, doth he thank that Servant, because he did those things which were commanded him? I trow not: *So likewise you, when ye shall have done all those things, which*

which are commanded you, say, *We are unprofitable Servants.* The just and full Sense and Import of which Words, I shall collect into this one Proposition; That it is impossible for Man to merit any thing from God. And this I shall shew,

I. From the Nature of Merit.

II. From Scripture.

III. I shall answer some of the principal Arguments the Papists urge in defence of it. And,

IV. And lastly, conclude with some Practical Inferences from the Whole.

I. Then I am to shew, That it is impossible for Man to merit any thing from God, from the Nature of Merit.

Now the true Nature of Merit will be best known, if we consider some of the most inseparable and essential Properties of it: such are, for instance, these four.

1st, That the Action by which a Man pretends to merit, be done by himself; for if it be done by another, it cannot be meritorious.

2dly, It must be voluntarily done, and of our own Free Will; for if it be a Debt, we do no more than our Duty.

3dly, It must be done to the Benefit of another, who thereupon must be obliged in gratitude to repay it.

4thly, And lastly, There must be an Equality between the Action and the Reward;

for if the latter be greater, it cannot proceed from Merit, but Favour.

1st, Then Man cannot possibly merit from God, if we consider the first Property of Merit, *viz.* That the Action by which he pretends to it be done by himself; for if it be done by another, it cannot be meritorious.

Now I think I have plainly shewn in the Preface to this Discourse, that we cannot of ourselves so much as think a good Thought, but our Sufficiency is of God. So that whatever good Actions we do, we do 'em by the Grace and Assistance of him, from whom we pretend to merit by 'em. And can any thing be a greater Contradiction, than to imagine we can lay an Obligation upon any Man, by lending him his own Money, which he had before a just Right and Title to? Would that Man be thought in his Senses, that should bring an Action at Law for the Recovery of a Debt of that nature? Would not the Defendant plead, That there was nothing alter'd but the Possessour, that the Property was his own before, and that therefore it cannot justly lay any Obligation of Debt upon him? And if this be the Case now between Man and Man, how much more is it so between Man and God? upon whom we are so far from being capable of laying any Obligation, that all that we can do is not more than our Duty. Which is the second Property of Merit I proceed to consider, *viz.*

2dly, That the Action be done voluntarily, and of our own Free Will; for if it be a Debt, we do no more than our Duty.

Thus our Saviour himself, whose Omnipotence foresaw the proud haughty Tempers of Men, tells 'em in the words following the Text, That when they have done all those things which are commanded 'em, they should say, they have done that which was their Duty to do; intimating, no doubt, that where Duty engaged on one side, there could be no Obligation laid on the other. So that as we cannot make a Man our Debtor by lending him his own Money, so neither can we cancel a Debt by paying a Man with his own, much less lay any Obligation; for that would make a Man both Debtor and Creditor at the same time, and in the same respect, which implies nothing less than the utmost Folly and Absurdity. So that I argue thus: Where the Debt is so great, that it cannot be satisfy'd by all that we have or can do (as the Case is between God and Man) there can be founded no sort of Obligation, and consequently there can be no room for Merit. So that I think it is plain from the two first Properties of Merit, that it is impossible for Man to plead any such thing from God. Proceed we therefore to the *3d*, *viz.*

3dly, That the Action be done to the Benefit of another, who thereupon must be obliged in gratitude to repay it.

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This we are told is impossible in Job xxii. 2, 3. by a Question implying the strongest Negative: *Can a Man be profitable to God, as he that is wise may be profitable to himself? Is it any pleasure to the Almighty, that thou art Righteous? Is it gain to him that thou makest thy Way perfect?* And in the 35th ch. and the 7th Verse, *If thou be righteous, what giveſt thou him, or what receiveth he at thy bands?* So that if whatever we do, be neither pleasure nor profit to God; if by our being righteous we give him nothing, and if he can receive nothing from our hands, as it is plain he that is infinitely happy cannot, it follows by necessary Consequence, that we cannot merit from him, by doing that which is unprofitable to him. So that it's evident this third Property of Merit makes as much against the Papists as either of the other two. Pass we on therefore to the fourth and last, *viz.*

4thly, And lastly, that there be an Equality between the Action and the Reward; for if the latter be greater, it cannot proceed from Merit, but Favour.

Now it being what Men expect always from one another, that the Return be at least as great as the Kindness done, that they have full a Pennyworth (if not more) for their Penny, they are apt to expect the same from God too; and so to magnify their own good Works, as if they thought they in the strictest Sense deserved Heaven, and that nothing

thing less than eternal Happiness could make 'em sufficient Compensation or Satisfaction for 'em. But alas ! what mighty Performances can be expected from this poor precarious helpless Creature, that he can pretend to weigh in the Ballance with an eternal Weight of Glory ? His very Righteousness is as filthy Rags, and he is altogether Vanity. He doats and dreams of Merit, not considering what would be the dreadful Consequence of his having his Desert. He vacates the Merit of Christ's Sufferings, by vainly ascribing it to his own good Works, and so looses Heaven, by pretending to deserve it. And this too, contrary to the common Sense and Reason of Mankind, since 'tis so entirely disagreeable to all the four Properties, that any thing that he can do, should deserve that Name.

Having thus shewn from the Nature of Merit, that 'tis impossible for Man to merit any thing from God, I proceed to prove the same,

II. *From Scripture.*

The first Text therefore that I shall mention as a plain Contradiction to this Doctrine of Merit, is that in *Rom. vi. 23. The Wages of Sin is Death, but the Gift of God is Eternal Life thro' Jesus Christ our Lord.*

Now if Eternal Life could possibly have been deserv'd, would not the Apostle have said, after having told us, That the Wages of Sin was Death, but the Reward of good Works is eternal Life ? or something to that pur-

purpose? Whereas, to convince us of the contrary, he directly in plain Terms tells us, it is the Gift of God. Now the Nature of a free Gift implies the utmost Contradiction to all Merit: For what does he give me, that delivers no more into my hands than what I have rigidly, and in the strictest Sense deserv'd? So that it's being a free Gift, supposes something more given than is deserv'd, and consequently its being such, must exclude all Merit.

2dly, The same Apostle in *Tit. iii. 5.* says, *We are saved not by Works of Righteousness which we have done, but according to his Mercy he saved us.* Now I argue thus: Where the Reward is given upon Mercy, there can be no Merit, for Merit supposes it in strict Justice due. Now there can be no Mercy shewn in performing that which is in strict Justice due; so that this Text being a plain Proof, that according to his Mercy God saves us, and not according to his strict Justice, must exclude all Merit: especially since St. *Paul* has in this place oppos'd the Mercy of God to any Works of Righteousness which we may have done; it's plain our full Recompence hereafter will not be of them, but of God's Mercy.

3dly, St. *James* tells us in *James ii. 10.* *That whosoever shall keep the whole Law, and yet offend in one Point, he is guilty of all.* And St. *John* says, in *1 Job. 1.* *That every Man does offend in one Point or other;* For if we say

say that we have no Sin, we deceive ourselves : So that every Man by consequence must be guilty of the Breach of the whole Law ; and is not he that is so, a fit Person to plead Merit from God ? To what a degree of Pride and Arrogance will Man aspire, that confidently expects a Reward for his Offences, that sins constantly against God, and yet pleads Merit for so doing ? that pretends that he can merit Heaven, and yet is forc'd to confess, by his daily praying for it as a free Gift, that he does not deserve so much as Bread ? Innumerable are the Texts which may be quoted on this Head, as *Eph. ii. 10. By Grace ye are saved thro' Faith, and that not of yourselves ; it is the Gift of God, not of Works, which God hath prepared, that we should walk in them.* And *Rom. viii. 18. The Sufferings of this Life are not worthy of the Glory which shall be revealed* ; and if not worthy of it, they surely cannot merit it. And many others, and in short, the whole Tenour of the New Testament is so plain a Contradiction to this Doctrine of Merit, that there can be no better a Reason assign'd, why the Papists do at this day forbid the Common People the reading of the Holy Scriptures, than for fear they should discover to 'em the Falseness of this Doctrine, upon which the most beneficial part of the Trade of their Priests and Jesuits does so much depend. So that having shewn the Absurdity of this Doctrine of Merit,

I. *From the Nature of it.* And,
 II. *From Scripture.* I pass on,

III. *To answer some Arguments the Papists urge in defence of it.* And,

1st, They say, That in many places of Scripture there is a Reward promised to all true Believers, who perform good Works; and therefore, say they, Reward and Merit being relative Terms, the same Scriptures oblige us to admit the one as well as the other.

But this is a great Mistake, and proceeds from want of considering the Nature of the Reward, which is not a Reward of Debt; for had it been so, it would have imply'd the Nearness of Relation they say it has to Merit. But it is a Reward of Mercy, given by the gracious Good Will of the Almighty, without any thing done on Man's part to deserve it: and consider'd as such, it is no way a relative Term with Merit, and consequently cannot stand them in the least stead, who would use it as an Argument to defend it. Besides, suppose we should grant, that Life Everlasting is a Reward upon Desert, it does not follow, that it is for any inherent Excellency in our good Works, but for the Merit of our Saviour imputed to us, causing us thereby to merit; and then the Relation is between the Reward and Christ's Merit, and not between that and our own.

2dly, They say that our good Works are meritorious, because Christ merited by his Death,

Death, that our Works should merit Eternal Life.

And this is no more nor less than a down-right Falshood, and a politick Invention of their own. For all that we can any where find in the Holy Scriptures, is, That our Saviour, by the Merit of his Death and Sufferings, has obtain'd for us the Pardon of our Sins, Imputation of Righteousness, and Life Everlasting. He died, not to enable our good Works to satisfy the Anger of his Father, but for our Sins, that they might be forgiven. And this is the Account, and the whole Account too, that the Scriptures give us of this Matter ; and therefore is their Foundation false and rotten, worthy of the Superstructure they build upon it. But that they may be left without Excuse for this Assertion, or that Christ did not merit, that our Works should merit, I shall offer these following Reasons :

(1.) If Christ made a sufficient Sacrifice, Oblation, and Satisfaction for the Sins of the whole World, he must be supposed to do more than was necessary for him to do, if he intended to give any Man power to merit the same for himself.

(2.) He admits of no Partner in the Office of Mediation between his Father and us ; for *he is the one Mediator between God and Men, the Man Christ Jesus.* Now it's plain, if Men can by any good Works of their own merit the Increase of Grace and Happiness for themselves, then has Christ Partners

in the Work of our Redemption ; but the latter is false, and therefore the former must likewise fall to the ground. Besides,

(3.) For one good Action we do, we are guilty of many Sins, even the best of us, which stain and defile our highest Vertues after such a manner, as make 'em incapable of pleading for us, our Vices being infinitely too heavy for 'em in the Ballance of the Law. So that I think this Argument requires no further Answer. Pass we on therefore to the

3d Argument of the Papists in behalf of their beloved, because profitable Doctrine of Merit. For so,

3dly, They say, That our Works merit by way of Bargain or Covenant, because God has promised to reward 'em.

Now the Scriptures mention but two Covenants, the one Legal, the other Evangelical. In the legal Covenant, Eternal Life is promised to good Works, *Do these things, and thou shalt live.* But who is sufficient for these things ? Who is able to do all that the Law requires ? So that we must fly to the Evangelical Covenant, if we intend to attain to everlasting Happiness. And here we shall find that the Reward is not promis'd to the Work, but to the Doer of it for the Sake and Merit of Christ. As for example, *Be faithful unto Death, and I will give thee the Crown of Life.* Where you see, the Promise is not made to the Virtue of Fidelity, but to the faithful Man, whose Fidelity

lity shews that he is in Christ, for the Merit of whose Obedience God promised the Crown of Life. But, say they, if Works do not merit, why are they mentioned in the Promise? The Reason is plain in the Instance above-mention'd, because they are Tokens that the Doer of them is in Christ, for whose alone Merit the Promise shall be performed. So that having answer'd three of the principal Arguments the Papists urge in behalf of the Doctrine of Merit, I shall,

IV. *And lastly, conclude with some Practical Inferences from the Whole.*

1st Then, If it has been shewn from the Nature of Merit (and surely nothing can shew the Nature of it more fully than the four most inseparable, essential Properties of it;) I say, if it has been shewn from thence, that this Doctrine of Merit is false, absurd, and impossible, and the best Man living cannot, by his compleatest Services, strictly merit Eternal Life: This is not only a manifest Confutation of the Papists Doctrine of Merit, Works of Supererrogation, Indulgences, and all that Heap of Lumber built upon it; but is, by natural Consequence, and direct Inference, as good an Argument against the *Arians* and *Socinians*, as any the Wit of Man can find in the whole Bible.

For can any thing be more entirely disagreeable to the three first Properties of Merit,

rit, than that Christ should merit, and yet be nothing but a mere Creature. For,

(1.) His Manhood, considered by itself, does nothing of itself, but by Grace received from the Godhead.

(2.) As a Creature, he is bound to do whatsoever he does.

(3.) Christ, as a Creature, cannot give any thing to God, that he did not receive from him.

For these three Reasons certainly the Manhood cannot by itself merit, but only as it is personally united to the Godhead of the Son ; so that they are, by this Argument, brought into this Dilemma, either to own Christ's Divinity, or to deny his Merit and Satisfaction. And indeed I thought myself oblig'd to make this just Inference against this too prevailing a Sect and the Papists at the same time, since they both equally deny the Merit of Christ's Satisfaction ; one by denying his Divinity, and the other by assuming Merit to themselves.

2dly, If the Scriptures are a plain Proof likewise, that it is impossible for Man to merit any thing from God (as I think has been as sufficiently shewn as a Discourse of this Length would admit) let us adhere firmly to that Truth, that is so clearly revealed to us in God's Holy Word ; and not only so, but let us return our most hearty Thanks to the Great God of Heaven and Earth, that he has been pleas'd to convey his Mind to us thro'

so many different Generations ; that we have the Scriptures not only publickly read to us, but likewise, upon any Difficulty, to consult every one in our own Tongue, which cannot be less than the utmost Satisfaction, whenever such monstrous Doctrines are obtruded on us by the Cunning and Sophistry of designing Men. And I cannot forbear being charitably inclin'd to hope, that many of the Papists themselves, who are now so fierce Sticklers for this Doctrine of Merit, had they the Advantage of the Scriptures as we have, would be of another Opinion ; and so likewise as to many other of their Tenets. Greatly therefore were it to be wish'd, that God would be pleas'd to put it into their Hearts to consult those Sacred Oracles, for here in *England* they may do it if they please ; and thence I am apt to think they would receive such full and ample Satisfaction, that we should, for the future, have nothing to fear either from the real or pretended Danger of Popery among us, but should all join in one common Faith and Interest ; they would there see how they are impos'd upon by their Priests and Jesuits, that they oblige them to the Belief of the Doctrine of Merit, only for the sake of Works of Supererrogation, and of both only as a Contrivance to make a Penny for themselves.

3dly, If I have fully answer'd the three principal Arguments the Papists make use of in defence of this Doctrine of Merit, it must be

be reasonable to believe, that when these grand Bulwarks are beaten down, they can have but little to say for themselves. Nothing but what any Man, that is conversant with the Holy Scriptures, may, with equal Ease, contradict and confute. Let us therefore adhere firmly to the Protestant Religion, I mean to the Church of *England*: Let us not be discouraged from performing what good Works we are able, because they cannot in themselves merit; but let us remember that we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the Righteous, who is the Propitiation for our Sins, and has merited that for us which we could never have done for ourselves: And tho', after all our best Services, we must acknowledge ourselves unprofitable Servants, yet that we have a kind and indulgent Master, who has given us his Word, and cannot lye, that he will reward us, tho' not for our Works sake, yet for the Sake and Sufferings of his dear Son, who died for our Sins, and now sitteth at God's Right Hand making Intercession for us.

To whom, with the Father, and the Holy Spirit, be ascribed, as is most due, all Honour, Power, Might, Majesty, and Dominion, both now and for evermore. Amen.

THE
DOCTRINE
OF
TRANSUBSTANTIATION
Confuted,
IN A
SERMON
ON
JOHN vi. 53.

*Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily,
I say unto you, Except ye eat the Flesh of
the Son of Man, and drink his Blood,
ye have no Life in you.*

By EDM. RYVES, D.D.
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St. JOHN vi. 53.

Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the Flesh of the Son of Man, and drink his Blood, ye have no Life in you.

THE Text is an Answer, and one would think a satisfactory one too, to a Cavil in the preceding Verse, against our Saviour's giving us his Flesh to eat: For the Jews mistaking his Meaning, interpreted every thing he said in a literal Sense; so that he having told them, that he was the living Bread which came down from Heaven, and that if any Man eat of this Bread he shall live for ever; that the Bread that he would give was his Flesh, and that he would give it for the Life of the World: they presently raised this Objection, *How can this Man give us his Flesh to eat?* To which our Saviour re-

ply'd, to their greatest Astonishment, tho' not to their Conviction, introduced with a repeated Assveration, *Verily, verily, I say unto you, except ye eat the Flesh of the Son of Man, and drink his Blood, ye have no Life in you.* This, one would have thought, (since, as they observed, 'twas impossible he should give us his Flesh to eat, in a literal Sense) should have put them upon enquiring in what other Sense the Words might reasonably be understood; and then they would presently have found, that they did not imply so gteat a Contradiction as they imagin'd: For if they had consider'd them in a mystical and a spiritual Sense, as our Church does, they must presently have concluded them reconcileable to their Reason, and of infinite Advantage to their eternal Salvation. But their gross carnal Hearts persisted still on in misunderstanding his Meaning, which was, by putting the thing so far as to imply a Contradiction, to convince 'em, that that was not what he designed by 'em.

However, the *Jews* themselves were not so blind but they saw the Contradiction, tho' they did not rightly understand him. But there are many in the World with much wider Throats than the *Jews* had, that not only take these Words in the literal Sense, as the *Jews* did, but swallow the Contradiction along with it, and so stick at nothing, even twenty other Contradictions both to Scripture and Philosophy, in order to defend that

that monstrous Doctrine of Transubstantiation, which the Church of *Rome* so zealously and so strenuously does ; and which therefore for the sake of those poor Souls, who may be fatally deluded by it, I shall endeavour to prove to be contrary,

I. *To Reason.*

II. *To Scripture.*

III. *I shall examine the Arguments the Papists urge in the Proof of it.* And,

IV. and Lastly, *Conclude with some short Inferences from the whole.*

I. Then, I am to prove, that the Doctrine of Transubstantiation (which is by the Council of *Trent* made a necessary Article of Faith among the Papists) is contrary to *Reason* ; and that it is so, will appear,

1st, From the Nature of Body. Now one essential Property of Body is, that it be seated in some Place, so as one may say where it is, that it hath Length, Breadth, and Thickness, without which it is no longer a Body. Now whatever has these Dimensions must necessarily be circumscribed in some Place, so that it may be determined positively to be there, and there only ; for the same Body cannot occupy two different Places at the same time : so that for the Papists to assert, that the Real Body of Christ is present in the Sacrament, in so many different Places as that is administered at the same time, is

is destroying at once the very Nature of Body, and consequently to the Reason of Mankind a plain Contradiction. But this will appear further,

2dly, From the Nature of a Sacrament. 'Tis certain that in all Sacraments there must be a Sign, and a Thing signified, and a Proportion or Relation between 'em : But the supposed real Presence of the Papists destroys it all ; for when the Bread is really turned into Christ's Body, and the Wine into his Blood, the Sign is plainly abolished, and there remains nothing but the outward Appearance of Bread and Wine. Now the Nature of any thing includes the several Ends for which it was designed, and one of these likewise is destroyed by the Supposition of a real Presence. Now one chieft End of the Sacrament is to remember Christ till his Coming again : But if he be there present, there is no Occasion of rememb'ring him ; besides that it is a manifest Bull and a Contradiction, rememb'ring having always a proper and necessary regard to some Person or Thing that is absent from us.

3dly, Another Argument to prove that this Doctrine of the Papists of Transubstantiation is contrary to Reason, may be drawn from hence, That in the Sacrament the Body of Christ is received as it was crucified, and his Blood as it was shed upon the Cross ; but supposing the Elements to be changed into his Body, it remains still as a Body, but not as

a Body Crucify'd, because the Act of Crucifixion is ceased: so that it is Faith alone in the Receivers, which makes Christ present to 'em in the Sacrament. Besides, what grand Repository can they find, where they can have preserv'd the Blood of Christ, which at his Crucifixion ran out of his Hands, Feet, and Side upon the ground? Who gather'd it up? or What Necessity was there of such a Collection, he being to live a Spiritual, not a Natural Life, after his Resurrection? They cannot therefore say, that it is present under the form of Wine locally (as the Schoolmen call it) that is, so as to possess or occupy the Place which the Wine did. So that it is, and must by all Men of Sense be thought much properer to say, that we receive it spiritually by Faith, which alone can give a Being to things which are not. Thus I think I have plainly shewn, that the Doctrine of Transubstantiation is contrary to Reason. Proceed we therefore to prove,

II. That it is so likewise to the Scriptures.

And one would think that whatever Doctrine can be plainly shewn to be contrary both to Reason and Scripture, since all Mankind value themselves so much for the one, and ought to be guided by the other, should be so far from gaining the Belief of any, that it ought to be universally detested and abhor'd. And that I may give you full Satisfaction in this point, I shall endeavour to shew, that it is

is contrary to several Articles of our Creed, which were all collected from, and may be prov'd by Scripture.

1st Then, Our Creed teaches us, that Christ's Body was made of the Pure Substance of the Virgin *Mary*, and that but once, *viz.* when he was conceiv'd of the Holy Ghost, and born ; but if there be a real Conversion of the Substances in the Sacrament, then is Christ's Body made of Bread, and his Blood of Wine : so that we must be forc'd to believe Contradictions, that his Body was made of the Substance of the Virgin, and not of the Virgin ; made once, and not once, but often.

2^{dly}, If his Body and Blood be under the forms of Bread and Wine, then is he not yet ascended into Heaven, as our Creed positively affirms him to be ; and with what Propriety of Speech can he be said to come down from Heaven at the Day of Judgment, if he be not at that time absent from the Earth ?

3^{dly}, That Christ sitteth at the right hand of God the Father Almighty, is another Article of Faith contain'd in our Creed, which must be true at all times, the word *sitteth* being used in the present Tense, as well when the Sacrament is administred, as when it is not administred ; how then can Men be so besotted, as to believe Christ *Corporeally* present with 'em in the Sacrament, who at the same time profess, they believe he sitteth at the right hand of God the Father Almighty ? Besides,

4^{thly},

4thly, How do they reconcile the actual Conversion of the Bread into Christ's Body with that Text, *Neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy one to see Corruption?* so that the Body of the Bread must still remain. So that till their Priests can find out some Art, to keep the Sacramental Bread from corrupting, this Text will stand as an invincible Argument against this Doctrine of Transubstantiation.

5thly, The very Words of the Institution itself are a thorough Confutation of this Doctrine: *Who, meaning our Saviour, in the same night that he was betray'd, took Bread, and when he had given thanks, he brake it, and gave it to his Disciples, saying, Take, Eat; This is my Body; Do this in remembrance of me.* Now if his Body was actually present in that Sacrament, then did he take and break himself, and not only gave himself to his Disciples to eat, but eat himself likewise: Now can any thing be more monstrously silly and ridiculous than this?

6thly, And lastly, St. Paul tells the *Corinthians*, in Chap. xi. of his first Ep. and the 26th Verse, *For as often as ye eat this Bread, and drink this Cup, ye do shew forth the Lord's Death, 'till he come;* so that it seems he is not there present already: if he were, *'Till he come* must be downright Nonsense. From all which Texts put together, sufficient to convince any reasonable Man, I conclude that the Doctrine of Transubstantiation is as

contrary to Scripture, as I've shewn it to be to Reason. Proceed we therefore,

III. *To examine the Arguments the Papists urge in the proof it.*

And 1st, Their first Argument is drawn from these words in *John vi. 55*. *My Flesh is Meat indeed, and my Blood is Drink indeed.* From whence they would argue, that Christ's Body and Blood must be eaten and drank with the mouth ; and this they say is so plain, that they admire how any one can deny the Premises, they being our Saviour's own Words, or the Force of the Conclusion drawn from 'em. I answer,

(1.) That if in the Premises by the *Flesh* they understand carnal Meat, and by the *Blood* real and natural Drink, I deny the Truth of the Proposition : For tho' his Body be *Meat indeed*, yet is it Spiritual Meat ; and tho' his Blood be *Drink indeed*, yet is it Spiritual Drink : and if they allow this Sense of the Words, then I deny the Force of their Conclusion. So that they may as well infer the Doctrine of Transubstantiation from the Words of our own Catechism, where we say, " That the Body and Blood of Christ are verily and indeed taken and received by the Faithful in the Lord's Supper," as from this Text ; a Spiritual Eating and Drinking being understood in both places. Besides,

(2.) The very Intent and Design of this Chapter of St. *John* is to prove, that to have Faith

Faith in Christ, and to eat his Flesh and drink his Blood, are all one; which is the Reason why they are verily and indeed *only* receiv'd by the Faithful in the Lord's Supper.

(3.) This Chapter of St. John cannot possibly be understood of a Sacramental Eating his Flesh and Drinking his Blood, because the very Words of the Text would, taken in that sense, infer the Damnation of all those, who died before the Passion of our Saviour. For these Words were spoken at the Passover then instant, which was above a Year before our Saviour's Passion.

(4.) He that says, *He that eateth my Flesh shall live for ever*, says also, *He that eateth of this Bread shall live for ever*. Now no one can pretend to say, that Christ ever was or could properly be Bread, or be eaten by Mankind as such; forasmuch therefore as he could only be figuratively eaten as Bread, we may fairly argue, that he could only be figuratively eaten as Flesh, the same Phrase or Manner of Expression being fairly taken in the same sense in both places. But,

2dly, The next Text by which they would impose this monstrous Doctrine of Transubstantiation upon the World, is taken from the Words of the Institution, *This is my Body*.

And to this likewise we may make the same Reply, That the Words are a figurative Expression, meaning that this Bread is a Representation of his Body; and that for this undeniably Reason, That in the Institution of

the other part of the Sacrament, the Papists themselves acknowledge a Figure in the Expression, *This Cup is the New Testament in my Blood*; that is, 'tis a Sign, Seal, and Pledge to assure us thereof. Now can any Man of sense doubt, when he is forced to own a Figure in one place, but that Christ designed to speak by a Figure in the other? especially when the natural Sense of the Words imply such a manifest Contradiction (as has been shown) both to Reason and Scripture? Add to this,

(2.) That the Scripture's usual way of Expression concerning the Sacrament has been generally by a Figure, by putting the Name of the Thing signify'd to the Sign: As for instance in *Gen. xvii. 10.* Circumcision is call'd *the Covenant of God*; and in the next Verse, by way of Exposition, *the Sign of the Covenant*. And in *Exod. xii. 11.* the Paschal Lamb is call'd *the Angel's passing by, or over the Houses of the Israelites*; whereas indeed it was but a Sign of it. And *the Rock was Christ*; And *the Passover was Christ*: and innumerable other places. So that, to say no more of all the other Difficulties and Inconsistencies 'tis necessarily attended with, 'tis but understanding our Saviour, as you must understand all the other Expressions of Scripture, and there's an end of the Papists Doctrine of Transubstantiation. But,

3dly, The Papists urge in behalf of this Doctrine, That the Sacraments are a very great

great Mystery, that our poor weak pur-blind Reason cannot, nor ought not to pretend to judge of Mysteries, all such being manifestly above our Reason. As for instance, say they, The Doctrine of the Trinity is a very great and venerable Mystery, and what we cannot any way comprehend, much less argue about ; and yet by your own Confession, say they, you are obliged to believe it : and from hence they would infer the Impertinence as well as Insufficiency of my first Objection against it, That it is contrary to our Reason. To which I answer,

That whatever is not a manifest Contradiction to our Reason and our Senses, we are unquestionably obliged to believe, if it be plainly reveal'd to us ; which is the Reason why our Church believes the Mystery of the Holy Trinity : but whatever is not plainly reveal'd, and at the same time contradicts the Sense and Reason of Mankind, ought to demand our Disbelief, as much as the other challeng'd our Assent ; and that for this Reason, Because our Saviour in the very Performance of many of his Miracles, appeal'd to the Senses of those he endeavour'd to convince ; which he certainly would never have done, had he not design'd their Senses should have been the proper Judges in those Cases : So that all this Cant about Mysteries is nothing to the purpose, and therefore they are forc'd to fly to their last Remedy, *viz.*

4thly,

4tably, And lastly, That their Church requires the Belief of it, it being a Doctrine *de fide* (as they call it) which they say is a sufficient Reason why they should believe it; that is, 'tis the best they can give: And I must needs own, that I do not at all wonder, that the Church of *Rome* so positively requires an implicit Faith from all its Followers, because, if they did not, they would have few or no Followers at all. For if they allow'd 'em the Use either of their Reason or the Scriptures, the Falsity of this, and many other of their Doctrines would soon be detected, our Reformation from 'em be entirely justify'd, and the number of 'em by degrees lessen'd. When the Lawyer in the Gospel ask'd our Saviour, what he should do to be saved, he did not tell him, he should believe as this or that Church believes, but answers him by another Question: *What is written in the Law? How readest thou?* that is, The Scriptures are thy Rule, do as they direct thee, and thou shalt live. So that the Scriptures being positively against this Doctrine, which their Church enjoins 'em the Belief of, I should think it not in the least difficult to determine, which it was safest for any Man, who hopes for Salvation hereafter, to adhere to.

And thus I hope I have sufficiently answer'd the Arguments the Papists urge in defence of this Doctrine of Transubstantiation, which was

was the Third Thing I proposed in the entrance of this Discourse.

But before I proceed to the Inferences I promis'd you from these Premises, give me leave to observe one thing to you ; that is, that they have one Loop-hole still left to creep out at, by which they delude the ignorant sort of People, who are not so well acquainted with Church-History : and that is, by pleading the Antiquity of this Doctrine, a Falsity any one but a Papist would blush at ; for 'tis plain there was no such Doctrine ever heard of, till above three hundred Years after Christ, the Fathers of the three first Centuries being unanimously against it, it never having been made an Article of Faith among 'em till the Council of *Trent*. So that its Novelty is no less an Argument against it, than any other that has been offered. Proceed we therefore,

IV. And lastly, To make some short Inferences from the Whole.

1st Then, If this Doctrine of Transubstantiation be a manifest Contradiction to our Reason, and be likewise a necessary Article of Faith among the Papists, it follows by fair Implication, that no Man can be a Papist without laying aside his Reason. I do not pretend to set up Reason against Revelation, but only so as to judge of the Sense of any one part of it, when 'tis found contrary to the whole Tenour of all the rest, and then to have power

power to put such an Interpretation upon it, as that the Parts shall be found agreeable and consistent with each other: And if this be not allow'd us, our Reason can be of no use to us in the most material thing of all, the Salvation of our Souls: And it would seem very strange, that that which makes us accountable in another World, should be entirely laid aside by us in providing for it. Blessed be God, we live in a Country where the Establish'd Church does not demand of us an implicit Faith, and is not afraid of referring her Doctrines to the Judgment and Opinion of Mankind, as being establish'd upon such a sure Foundation, as will stand the Test of the nicest Reasoning. And as a Man must first lay aside his Reason, before he can be a Papist, so as soon as he becomes such, they'll take care to lock up the Scriptures from him, and that for this Reason, for fear, upon consulting those Sacred Oracles, he should be prevailed with to revolt from 'em. For if,

2dly, This Doctrine be contrary to Scripture, (as I hope has been plainly shewn) it follows that That, and no other, can be the Reason why they keep 'em from 'em. I know they give this Reason for it, That because ignorant and unlearned People are said to wrest the Scriptures to their own Destruction, they should therefore be entirely kept out of their hands. But I'll appeal to the Judgment of the whole World, whether this be

be not as good an Argument, That because some Men may take too large a Dose, and kill themselves by so doing, therefore Physick should never be used at all: So that this can be nothing but a specious Pretence, and the other must be the true and the only Reason of their so doing. And how abominably wicked that is, to keep that from Men, which is only able to make 'em wise unto Salvation, I mean the Holy Bible, containing the Old and New Testament! We have none of those little Artifices among us of the Church of *England*, as wanting none of them, but are always pressing and encouraging our People to read the Scriptures, as knowing that they are the Ground of our Faith, and that they who live nearest to their true Sense and Meaning are always the truest and the best Churchmen. But,

3dly, If I have answered the chiefest (if not all the) Arguments the Papists urge in Defence of this Doctrine of Transubstantiation (as I declare I can at present call to mind no other that deserves an Answer) what can it be, after all, that can induce so many to turn Papists? Nothing, certainly, but the mean Consideration of Self-Interest, a powerful Motive indeed with too many, whose Religion it may be is to chuse, and who before were very little better than downright Atheists, and who therefore can add nothing but Number to either Side. And indeed I envy them not such Proselytes, who are a

Scandal and Disgrace to any Church they belong to ; but for the sake of their poor Souls, for which I am sincerely and heartily concerned, I would advise each of them to consider the high Importance of that Question of our Saviour's; *What is a Man profited, if he shall gain the whole World, and loose his own Soul ? Or what shall a Man give in exchange for his Soul ?* And he must necessarily conclude, that not all the Wealth he can bequeath to the Church, at the close of it, can answer for an ill-spent Life, nor all the Masses they can say, when he is dead and gone, can make the least Atonement for his taking up a Religion, whose Doctrines are contrary both to Reason and Scripture ; but will find the Argument turn upon himself, That whereas what he did he thought was for his Interest, he will then, too late, find that the Scriptures had been his surest Guide, as being the Word of God, who cannot err, and that the following their Directions would have proved to his greatest and eternal Advantage.

And now it is high time to draw to a Conclusion : If any of you, after hearing this Discourse, wherein, I hope, I have fully proved this Doctrine of Transubstantiation to be contrary to Reason, Scripture, and Antiquity, and answered the chiefest Arguments in Defence of it, turn Papists, your Ruin must be of yourselves. But still I hope (and my Prayers shall not be wanting for you) that

that what I have said will have such a powerful Influence over you, as to cause you to adhere firmly to that Church in which you have been baptized and bred up, that you will be stedfast and unmoveable: However, I have this Consolation, that I have discharged a good Conscience, in laying before you the Dangers you will otherwise run yourselves into, and it must be of yourselves if ye perish.

4thly, and *Lastly*, From all that has been said, we may infer, how much 'tis the Duty of every Clergyman to lay before his People the Danger of a Religion, whose Articles of Faith are contrary to Reason, Scripture, and Antiquity; and how much all Magistrates are obliged, that have any regard for the Church of *England*, to endeavour to put a stop to the Growth of Popery, it being a Duty incumbent on 'em, not only by the Laws of Men, but by Laws of God. What then can we think of such Men, who, contrary to their Oaths and Subscriptions, are for introducing a Popish Pretender to reign over us? Can they possibly imagine that such an one will not attempt, at least to promote and establish his own Religion among us? Or can they think they shall escape better than their Neighbours if such a Thing could be effected? No; in the Popish Account we are all equally Heretics, whom they esteem it meritorious to destroy, and with whom that no Faith is

to be kept, is a Maxim in their Schools : Such Men not only act against their Reason, Scripture, and Antiquity, but against that too, which, I told you, induced too many to turn Papists, the darling Consideration of Self-Interest ; for if it ever should succeed, (which God avert) it must end in their own as well as the Ruin of their Country : But, God be thanked ! out of Mercy to themselves as well as others, their Attempts have been hitherto defeated. And may that God, to whom all Hearts be open, and from whom no Secrets are hid, protect and defend the present Establishment both in Church and State, that there may never be wanting one of the present Protestant Line to reign over us ; so shall we be safe from having any such absurd, contradictory, impossible Doctrines forced upon us ; so shall we act like rational Creatures, so shall we be guided by the Doctrine of Christ and his Apostles in this World, and be entitled to the Blessings promised to those that are so in that which is to come.

*Now to God the Father, God the Son, and
God the Holy Ghost, be ascribed, as is
most due, all Honour, Praise, Might,
Majesty, and Dominion, both now and
for evermore. Amen.*

F I N I S.